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polymerizable acids, particularly the hydroxyethyl and hydroxypropyl esters of acrylic and methacrylic acid can be used; furthermore, amino group-containing and ammonium group-containing esters and amides of polymerizable acids, such as dialkylamino esters, particularly the dimethyl and diethylaminoalkyl esters of acrylic and methacrylic acid, as well as trimethyl and trimethylammoniumalkyl esters and the corresponding amides. The above monomers can be polymerized alone to form homopolymers or mixed with each other to form mixed polymers. In addition, small amounts of water-insoluble monomers can be copolymerized with the above monomers, e.g. esters of acrylic and/or methacrylic acid with $C_1-C_{30}^{10}$ alcohols, styrene and alkylated styrenes. In general, the proportion of water-soluble monomers is from 60 to 100 wt.-%, relative to the overall monomers. As a rule, the water-insoluble (hydrophobic) monomers make up for 0 to 40 wt.-% of the monomers.

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 12 and 17.

Please amend the claims as follows:

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--13. (Amended) The process according to claim 24, wherein said nitrogen compound is selected from the group consisting of ammonia, ammonium hydroxide, hydroxylamine, alkanolamines, alkylamines and mixtures thereof.

14. (Amended) The process according to claim 24, wherein said nitrogen compound is selected from the group consisting of ammonia, ammonium hydroxide, mono-ethanolamine and di-ethanolamine and mixtures thereof.

15. (Amended) The process according to claim 24, wherein said monomer or monomers are neutralized with said nitrogen compound up to a neutralization level of from 10 to 100%.